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Implementing a Personalized Approach in the Remedial Reading Program

Shirley Burton Einarsson
Central Washington University

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IMPLEMENTING A PERSONALIZED APPROACH
IN THE REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Shirley Burton Einarsson
March, 1979

IMPLEMENTING A PERSONALIZED APPROACH
IN THE REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM

by

Shirley Burton Einarsson

A personalized reading program has been developed for a Title I remedial reading program in grades one through six. Providing an instructional reading program that best meets the needs of each student was a major goal. The four instructional categories included were decoding skills, comprehension, vocabulary development, and dictionary and study skills. A system has been developed for recording performance in these areas, plus conferences and books read. The aim was to help each child reach his maximum learning potential.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
Chapter	
1. THE PROBLEM AND RELATED TOPICS	1
Introduction	1
The Problem	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Limitations of the Study	3
Definition of Terms	3
Organization of the Project	5
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	6
Range of Variation in Reading Abilities	6
Historical Background	7
Definitions of Personalized Approaches	8
Rationale for Developing a Personalized Approach	10
Features of a Personalized Program	14
Selection of Materials	15
Use of Conferences	16
Use of Groups	18
Evaluation and Recording Systems	19
Implementation of a Personalized Program	19
Pitfalls to Avoid	20

Chapter	Page
Summary	23
3. PROCEDURES	25
Introduction	25
Physical Environment	26
Selection of Reading Materials	26
Areas of Instruction	27
Decoding Skills	27
Vocabulary Development	28
Comprehension Skills	28
Dictionary Skills	30
Conference and Instructional Management Techniques	30
Student Preparation	32
4. THE PROJECT	33
Descriptions of the Records	48
5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	67
Summary of the Project	67
Recommendations for Further Study	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY	72
APPENDIX	76

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Decoding Skills Learning Center	34
2. Samples of Decoding Center Activities	35
3. Vocabulary Development Learning Center	36
4. Samples of Vocabulary Development Activities	37
5. Comprehension Skills Learning Center	38
6. Samples of Comprehension Activities	39
7. Dictionary Skills Learning Center	40
8. Samples of Dictionary Skill Activities	41
9. Decoding and Comprehension Files	42
10. Section of Reading Corner	43
11. Student Mail Boxes and Files	44
12. Student Mail Boxes	45
13. Chart for Center Procedures	46
14. Student Routing Chart	47
15. Weekly Task Card	49
16. Conference Record	49
17. Student Reading Record	50
18. Books I Have Read for Primary Students	51
19. Books I Have Read for Intermediate Students	52
20. Phonic Skills, Student Record	54
21. Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form A	56
22. Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form B	57

Figure	Page
23. Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form C	58
24. Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form D	59
25. Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form E	60
26. Comprehension, Student Record	62
27. Comprehension, Group Record	63
28. Student Record for Structural Analysis, Context Clues, and Basic Sight Words	65
29. Student Record for Dictionary Skills and Vocabulary Development	66

Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM AND RELATED TOPICS

Introduction

It is common and accepted knowledge that each human being is born into this world with certain physical and mental attributes which are unique to that individual. These same attributes predispose the individual to recognize, assimilate, and evaluate a multitude of stimuli from the environment at differing rates of speed and at varying levels of retention and understanding. The controversy surrounding the question of whether environmental or hereditary factors are the greatest determiner of social, emotional, and mental development will not be discussed here. For purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to recognize that children do enter our school system with widely varying degrees of readiness and abilities for learning to read.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

At successively higher grade levels, the variations in mastery of the reading process for any given classroom of students cover successively wider ranges. Frequently, a way of organizing reading instruction in the elementary

grades is that of grouping, with each student in a classroom placed in one of three or four ability levels. This method may not make adequate provision for individual differences in learning styles and abilities of children. Even though the majority of children may be able to achieve a certain level of reading competency in the ability grouping method, the potential of each individual may be much greater than his/her performance indicates under this system. Those children whose performance places them at the lower end of the scale usually have the greatest difficulty fitting into the system and are then usually referred for the remedial reading program. If they are not total non-readers, they often have very specific gaps and weaknesses in their decoding skills and generally have difficulty comprehending what they read. To help these children learn to function at a higher success level, it is important that their deficiencies be diagnosed and a program of instruction be set up that is geared to the personal needs of each student. This study was designed to develop materials and organizational procedures to be used in setting up a personalized program of reading instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to develop an organized system of personalized reading instruction, including the development of materials and recording tools, and incorporating the areas of decoding skills, dictionary skills,

vocabulary development, and a hierarchy of comprehension skills. Providing an instructional program that would meet the individual learning styles and needs of elementary remedial reading students was a major goal.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to the development of materials and a recording system which would be used in implementing a personalized reading program. Materials and a recording system were designed specifically for use in the Title I Reading Program at Lewis and Clark Elementary School in Wenatchee, Washington.

Definition of Terms

Since some of the terminology used by educators today has been subjected to a variety of interpretations, their meaning has become nebulous. Therefore, terms relating to this study have been defined as follows.

Individual differences. This term refers to the variations in learning styles, rates, and abilities among individuals within a group.

Individualized instruction. This is the process of organizing the classroom so that effective and efficient learning experiences are developed and provided to fit the unique learning styles of each class member (19).

Personalized instruction. This term is similar in meaning to 'individualized instruction,' but stresses the

personal aspect of an individualized program. Also, this term does not negate the use of small groups for instructional purposes, which may be the case with the term 'individualized instruction' (22).

Differentiated assignment. This refers to a task or series of tasks designed by someone for a student to complete alone or with the help of others. The student receives the assignment when he has shown a need, either through formal or informal diagnosis, for that particular task. A series of differentiated tasks will cover varying levels of abilities and skills.

Learning center. This is a space in the classroom where one student, or a small group, works toward a self-directed specific objective. It contains precise, logical directions, a means of recording student progress, and has multi-level activities which may or may not have self-correction instruments.

Task cards. These are individual assignments that are written on index cards, and may require from one day to one week to complete. They generally will involve an activity dealing with a book, or parts of a book, which a student has completed. Some other possibilities are vocabulary and classification activities.

Task sheets. These are similar to task cards, but are usually short-term activities, to be completed in one day. Quite often they may serve to reinforce a recently taught skill or concept.

Organization of the Project

The remainder of the project will be organized in the following manner.

1. Chapter 2 will present a review of the literature dealing with individualized and personalized instruction.

2. Chapter 3 will state the procedures used in developing materials for a personalized program of reading instruction.

3. Chapter 4 provides samples of activities developed for the various areas of instruction, the recording system, and pictures of the physical environment, learning center areas, and some of the activities.

4. In Chapter 5 a summary of the project will be given together with recommendations for further study concerning the development and use of personalized instruction in a remedial reading program.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is a generally accepted fact by educators that children entering the public or parochial school system at the age of five or six arrive with widely varying abilities, needs, learning styles, and experiences. Keeping in mind these factors, teachers are expected to sort and classify these children into some form of cohesive, workable groups for the purpose of instructing them in the reading process.

Range of Variation in Reading Abilities

As any one classroom of students passes through our educational system, the range of variation in reading abilities, needs, and academic achievements of that group become increasingly greater and greater, but the members of that class are still usually organized into a limited number of groups based upon ability. At a very early age (by first or second grade), those who fall into the category of low reading ability and low achievement find it increasingly difficult to advance into a higher reading group and/or the next grade level. Generally, these students tend to fall farther and farther behind in performance as they progress up the grade ladder, and at some point become candidates

for the remedial reading program. One way to best serve the needs and interests of each child in this setting is by establishing an individualized program which provides the greatest flexibility in adapting to pupil readiness (23:352).

Veatch (25:4-5) discusses some assumptions which must be made if an individualized approach is to be implemented. Some of these are that children read better and faster when allowed to pace themselves; that reading instruction must be child oriented (not materials oriented); that there is no one correct sequence of skills; that not all skills need to be taught to all children; that no single piece of material meets the needs of every student; and that since reading is a personal act, choosing materials is an expression of oneself. She further feels that "the love of books and reading is encouraged when loved books are read."

Historical Background

The theory that individualized instruction is the most efficient and effective method of instruction is being advanced by many experts in the field of reading today. Although the concept of individualization is not new, Disick (8:3-13) indicates that it began to gain momentum in the mid-1960's with the advent of student revolts and radical changes in traditional values. Disick cites the findings

of other researchers, such as Silberman, who found schools to be "grim and joyless," and Abraham Maslow, who criticized the Skinnerian stimulus-response theory because it takes for granted the goals and needs of the learner. Durkin (9:113-15) states that a type of individualized reading program was actually begun in the late 1950's and was marked by three characteristics which are: "a generous collection of books in every classroom, selection of them by children, and individual teacher-pupil conferences." This movement has grown until there are almost "as many descriptions as proponents."

Spache and Spache (23:120-21) write that the origin of the individualized approach is attributable to the child development specialist Willard C. Olson who first related reading instruction to a series of child development principles which had seeking, self-selection, and self-pacing as major elements. Olson's philosophy, as explained by Spache and Spache, is that a child is motivated by internal needs, and that he will choose those reading materials best suited to his needs. The achievement level will also be determined by the growth pattern of a particular child.

Definitions of Personalized Approaches

Various descriptions of individualized, or personalized, approaches have been offered by educators. One was

given by Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, and Taylor (19:xiii), who stated that "individualized learning is the process of developing and retaining individuality by a classroom organization that provides for the effective and efficient learning experiences of each class member." This also correlated with Durkin's (9:44) definition, which is "individualized instruction is any instruction that deals at a suitable pace with what children need and are ready to learn."

Three "critical aspects" of a successful individualized program which Hunter (18:5) proposes are that learning tasks are at the correct level of difficulty, that the learning mode fits the learner's needs, and that the teaching method and style provide maximum chance for success.

Harris and Sipay (17:105-106) offer an extensive description of an individualized program:

True individualization is present when the child's instructional needs are understood, the materials he uses are appropriate in difficulty and content, he is guided effectively in learning progressively more advanced and more refined reading skills, he is helped to overcome difficulties that he may encounter, he feels that he is successful in reading, his attitudes toward reading become and remain positive, he learns to apply reading effectively in studying, his tastes become more mature, and he develops the habit of reading for pleasure.

Several educators have substituted the word 'personalized' for 'individualized.' Mendenhall (22) prefers the word 'personalized' because it places major focus on the person in all aspects of the program. Also,

the word personalized does not connote avoiding the use of small groups, which the word 'individualized' does for Mendenhall. Artley (2) prefers the word 'personalized' for much the same reasons as Mendenhall, and adds that teaching critical or creative reading almost demands a group situation. Cathcart (5:34-39) feels that the word 'personalized' better portrays the idea of utilizing the child's own language, through a language experience approach, and using the child's own words in preparing reading materials for him.

Rationale for Developing a Personalized Approach

Many educators stress the advantages of using a personalized approach to provide for differences in individual needs and learning styles. Spache and Spache state that "self-selection avoids teacher-pacing," pupil competition is diminished, the student is exposed to a broader vocabulary, motivation is usually greater, and teacher-pupil relationships are generally more positive (23:142). They further report results submitted by some enthusiastic teachers who have noted an increased volume of reading, willingness to share interests, increased self-esteem, growth in independent reading and planning activities, a decided increase in range of reading test scores (and related areas of social studies and science), and an increased interest and pleasure in reading (23:129).

Goodman and Watson (15:870) suggest that

People read in order to make their world more understandable, sensible and ordered. A reading program based on this concept provides opportunities for students to read for purposes which are important to them and to make order and sense of their world.

Other rationale is offered by Dona Stahl (24:13-20), in discussing Piaget's theory of cognitive development (that intellectual development involves the construction of a succession of cognitive structures, each stage characterized by a particular way of perceiving and interpreting the environment), and the theories of the perceptual psychologists. These latter theories are concerned with self-concept and the importance of a positive view of self if a person is to realize his full potential. Other major concepts of the perceptual psychologists are self-motivation and enhancement, which propose that a person naturally selects those things he has success at and feels ready for, and that the environment can either foster or inhibit the growth of a positive self-concept. Stahl maintains that educators have taken very little advantage of these psychological concepts. A child cannot be forced to learn, but he can be "placed in an environment rich with physical and social raw materials which can contribute to his learning."

These theories coincide closely with those of Blackhurst (3:183-86), Goodman (14:2-7), and others. Cathcart (5:34-39) offers a list of rationale for personalizing the reading process which are as follows: (1) the

self-selection of books is highly motivating; (2) a child reads more widely and with greater enthusiasm when motivated; (3) active student involvement aids in developing responsibility for one's own learning and results in more effective, efficient learning; (4) each person has his own unique learning style and needs, (5) the teacher gets to know the strengths and weaknesses of each student; and (6) knowledge of the child's needs helps the teacher design a program that will capitalize on his strengths and help eliminate his weaknesses.

Another positive aspect of a personalized approach is its effect on the development of decision-making ability. Martinek, Zaichkowsky, and Cheffers (21:349-56) made a study in which the effects of a teacher-directed program versus a joint pupil-teacher determined program were examined on the development of motor skills and self-concept. They found that when students were a part of the decision-making process there was a definite positive effect on the development of self-concept. However, a teacher-directed program appeared to be best for the development of motor skills.

Alberto, Tuckman, and Butler (1) located a small, upper middle class elementary school in New Jersey which showed a general increase during a three-year period in both achievement and intelligence test scores, in contrast to a general downward trend in both scores, both nationally

and internationally, during the same period. After investigation by Harnishfeger and Wiley (1975), this increase was interpreted as being primarily due to an Individually Guided Education Program (IGE), developed by Klausmeir, et al. (1971), that was implemented in the three elementary schools there in 1972. The greatest increase was in the verbal test area.

Mendenhall (22) conducted a study of a personalized reading program in grades one through six, involving the areas of (1) self-selection of books, (2) individual skill development, and (3) individual pupil-teacher conferences. She found that the experimental group had higher reading test scores in grades two and four, while the first grade control group had higher test scores. The scores were comparable for both groups in grades three and six. The experimental group in all grades had higher scores on survey tests of self-esteem and social acceptance. This was attributed to the idea that the "enhancement of self-concept is at the very core of personalization. As success builds upon success, a child comes to perceive himself as in control of his own behavior and learning." One major goal of her study was student demonstration of joy and independence in reading, and seven elementary teachers who implemented the experiment indicated that the students did demonstrate these traits.

Darrow and Howes (6:18-22) reported similar results at the end of their one-year study of an individualized program in second and fourth grades. The three areas of greatest improvement were increased interest in reading, self-confidence (both in reading and ability to independently manage time), and self-respect. The teachers also felt that the classroom climate was more comfortable, and that they were more cognizant of individual strengths and weaknesses with this program.

Features of a Personalized Program

Many educators are in general agreement about the major features of a personalized program, which basically are self-selection from a wide variety of materials, self-pacing, individual pupil-teacher conferences, and an efficient, effective record-keeping system. Spache and Spache (23:130) list organization, individual conferences, skill training, and record keeping as major components. Durkin (9:113-17) describes the three elements of early individualized programs, which were a broad material collection, self-selection by students, and teacher-pupil conferences. Veatch (25:4-5) states that a program to meet individual needs depends upon the use of a wide variety of materials, use of the child's own speech and language patterns, the motivation of self-selection, and individual conferences between teacher and pupil.

Harris and Sipay (17:97-99) discuss different types of individual procedures. These may range from a skills-centered approach (such as various commercial skills-management systems), each child reading a different material, or part of a class engaged in group activities while others are involved in an individualized program. Four different individual reading procedures are recreational reading, research reading, skills practice, and developmental reading. The latter is characterized by "seeking, self-selection, pacing," with evaluation done in conferences.

According to Davis (7), major features of an individualized program are analysis, which is diagnosing the child to determine needs, synthesis, which he defines as choosing appropriate materials and providing a suitable instructional setting, and operation, which involves carrying out the instructional program, evaluating, monitoring, and revising as needed.

Selection of Materials

Goodman and Watson (15) agree with other authors that an individualized program should incorporate a wide variety of material; self-selection and self-pacing by pupils; and a simple, effective recording system. They also felt that it may be useful for a student to have three books in progress at once, using a selection of 'mine, yours, ours,' which provides a variety in selection. The student chooses

'mine' without interference, the teacher chooses 'yours,' and 'ours' is a joint teacher-student selection.

Cathcart (5:34-39) stresses the need to obtain a wide selection of books of varied interest on all levels, and that the child be taught to select his own books using the 'Rule of Thumb' technique. She discusses the room atmosphere and room arrangement, which must accommodate different aspects of the program, such as quiet corners, conference areas, game areas, etc.

Besides a wide variety of materials, Veatch (25:3-4) indicates that oral language, written language, demonstrations, exhibitions, and listening activities should be included in and individualized program. Trade books, texts, workbooks, science equipment, manipulative material, newspapers, and magazines should be a part of available materials.

The use of basal readers in an individualized program is discussed by Harris and Sipay (17:105). Students can be allowed to select their own stories and to progress at their own rate. The authors cite a survey of 124 individualized programs in Iowa in which 75 percent of the teachers stated that they used basal readers in their programs.

Use of Conferences

Durkin (9:113-15) and Spache and Spache (23:323-24), among others, stress that student-teacher conferencing should be a very important part of any individualized

program. Durkin suggests that the conference gives a child time to talk with the teacher and to discuss or read part of a book to her, while for the teacher it is an opportunity to gather information about reading interests and possible problems of the child. Spache and Spache strongly believe in the value of conferencing as a means of gaining insight into the student's hopes, fears, anxieties, and problems. They feel that conferences provide opportunities for pupil-teacher interaction that cannot possibly occur in large groups or whole class situations, and that pupil-teacher planning is a major factor in pupil success. To quote Spache and Spache, "Individual conferences are the cornerstones of any approach to individualization." They also point out that teacher skill in conducting conferences of all types (diagnostic, evaluative, informational, discussional, etc.) is of major importance in determining the effectiveness of the conference and the program.

Conferences offer the best setting for intensive instruction, according to Veatch (25:127). They also provide a chance for the child to "share not only his interest in life, his concerns, his goals, but also his anxieties, his fear of failure, and his shortcomings."

Darrow and Howes (6:47-48) suggest the following five types of pupil-teacher conferences: (1) diagnosis of reading problems, (2) selection of material, (3) goal

planning, (4) recording progress, and (5) planning for parent-teacher conferences.

Use of Groups

Incorporating the results of research on group interaction into a personalized program is essential according to Carroll (4:45-54). Since this is a social world, students must be given the opportunity to develop their skills in human interaction. Some characteristics of groups, Carroll indicates, are that they reduce anxiety, help disseminate information, assist with skill development, and provide emotional support.

Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, and Taylor (19) stress that groups are a necessary part of a personalized classroom, to help children learn to interact and cooperate with other individuals. They also stress the goal that no child shall become a permanent member of a higher, average, or low group, but rather a member of a temporary, instructional group which is to function for a specific purpose at a given time.

Groups should be changed frequently, suggests Veatch (25:252-53), even on a daily basis if its purpose is fulfilled. Groups may be organized to meet a specific instructional need of several students, or students who do not need the assistance of the teacher may meet to work on a singular goal.

Evaluation and Recording Systems

Other areas to consider when setting up a personalized program are evaluation techniques and record-keeping systems. Fox (13) feels that one evaluation tool can be the first and last task cards of a series.

Spache and Spache (23:361) list five types of records they feel were necessary for each child. These include: (1) personal, biographical facts; (2) record of instructional, independent, and potential reading levels; (3) record of oral reading behaviors (checklist); (4) analysis of the pupil's oral reading behaviors; and (5) anecdotal notes to help judge the progress of the student.

Through the process of evaluation, the teacher determines when the student moves on to a new task, and when revision of the program is necessary. The choice of evaluative and management tools will be determined by the needs and styles of both the teacher and the students.

Implementation of a Personalized Program

Some educators (13, 19) agree that the initial implementation of a personalized program should proceed slowly, until both the teacher and the students feel comfortable and experience success with it. Fox (13) suggests that only part of the classroom should be converted to a personalized program at a time, beginning with a small group of the most independent workers. This gradual

introduction should help prevent many frustrating situations.

Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, and Taylor (19) state that making physical changes in the room does not insure that individualized learning will take place. Not all students are ready or able at the same time to adjust to a drastic change in the learning environment. These authors feel that the skills needed to work in an individualized setting must be taught and practiced just as the skills are taught and practiced for other subject areas.

A concern of Spache and Spache (23:347) in implementing an individualized program was being able to obtain an adequate supply of reading materials. Some teachers have suggested a minimum of three to five books per child. A continuous flow and exchange of books, plus stacks of magazines, newspapers, atlases, almanacs, encyclopedias, dictionaries, samples of social studies and science texts, a picture file, clipping file, variety of basal readers and workbooks on several levels, and a subscription to a children's book club would all be desirable materials.

Pitfalls to Avoid

In any program there are both positive and negative aspects. Disick (8:3-13) discusses some of the common misconceptions about this system, or pitfalls that must be avoided if this approach is to succeed. A personalized

approach does not mean "Do Your Own Thing" or "Let's Write Our Homework in Class" or "Teacher Abandonment." Teachers are deceiving themselves if they view this approach as letting the children do anything they want to in the classroom without any commitment or direction on the teacher's part.

Individualization does not imply that the teacher will abdicate all responsibility for decision-making and directing in the classroom, according to Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, and Taylor (19). The teacher must decide when to be a group leader or member. It is her responsibility to set parameters for behavior in the classroom.

Hunter (18:5-6) states her concerns thusly:

Individualized instruction has been the greatest boon and the greatest boondoggle of the last decade. Students are receiving more discerning attention to their educational needs than they have ever before experienced. They also are receiving more useless testing, more unindividualized and unpersonalized instruction by materials, and more unused and non-relevant bookkeeping on their achievement.

When this approach first was used, Hunter said, it was assumed that all children must go through the total sequence of skills and that only the learner's rate need to be accommodated. She felt this is a gross misconception, and denies individual learning styles.

In the opinion of Spache and Spache (23:130-136, 142), this approach doesn't solve the problem of the range of differences in the classroom, it does not increase the rate of progress for all students at all levels of ability, and

it makes tremendous demands upon a teacher's skill, preparation, and energy. Furthermore, they feel that a fair number of students feel no social or personal need to become good readers. Occasionally they not only do not seek it but actually reject reading. These authors claim that "simply bringing an individual and a pile of books together does not insure any bibliotherapeutic results."

Kepler and Randall (20:359) list several dangers with an individualized reading approach. Some are:

(1) since skills are most easily plugged into this program, the emphasis is on skills at the expense of other kinds of learning; (2) social goals and group interaction skills may be sacrificed; (3) many schools attempting this approach do not have adequate materials; (4) children do not often share reactions and discuss a story together; (5) literary experiences are often left out; and (6) a totally personalized program seems to have taken away much of the flexibility it was to provide, because teachers are so busy recording and plugging the student into the right workbook page.

According to Cathcart (5:34-39), this system has been criticized because it is less systematic in skill development. However, she suggests that the basal reader, or any other systematic method be incorporated into the program to insure systematized instruction.

Summary

When the various components of a personalized approach are analyzed and viewed in their entirety, it appears that an ideal way to implement such a program is to incorporate into it the best features of several systems which are those features that will enhance the learning environment of an individual and will provide him with materials or techniques that are best suited to his learning style and needs. Cathcart (5:34-39) suggests devising a program for each child by employing the strong points of three systems, which are the language experience approach, the basal reader approach, and the individualized instruction approach.

Davis (7:36-41) feels that the success of an individualized program depends upon the extent to which the proposed learning hierarchies are real, the extent to which individual differences in abilities and learning styles are accurately diagnosed, and the extent to which alternative educational methods and experiences are developed to adapt to the needs of each learner.

The above views correlate with those of Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, and Taylor (19), who state that it is the teacher's role to question, encourage, conference, and share in order to make the environment useful to the learner. They further indicate that success of the program is determined by the teacher's ability to decide what changes are

necessary and how they should be implemented. The goal of a personalized program is to create new standards for learning and behavior. By following these guidelines and striving for these goals, it should be possible to help each individual in the classroom make great advances in developing his potential abilities to the fullest.

Throughout the literature that was reviewed, few studies were encountered that dealt with the establishment of an individualized, or personalized, reading program in a remedial situation. With the paucity of studies in this area, little is known about the feasibility of utilizing this approach or the procedures for developing materials and recording systems to be used in a program of personalized reading remediation. However, of the projects that were found, one program developed by Fielder (12) provides several practical suggestions concerning the organizational aspects of an individualized program in a remedial setting.

The present project is an attempt to produce materials and develop learning centers and a recording system to be used in a personalized remedial reading program.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

After perusal of the literature, the writer noted certain recurring elements that many authorities considered essential to successful individualized programs. These were self selection of reading material, pupil-teacher conferences, and an efficient record-keeping system with skill development provided when deemed necessary to facilitate the reading process.

To provide a comprehensive, sequential reading program for remedial elementary students, the writer has established a personalized system that incorporates these elements for students enrolled in a Title I Reading Program. This chapter presents the initial planning of the physical environment, information concerning the selection of reading materials, choice of instructional areas, conference and instructional management techniques, and guidelines for student preparation.

Since all students in the Title I Reading Program are administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, these were used initially as the basis for determining student deficiencies and

for placement in appropriate instructional areas. Other areas were added as weaknesses were observed in student performance, such as in dictionary skills.

Physical Environment

The sequence of events leading to the final product began with an evaluation of the physical environment to assess the feasibility of setting up learning centers in the existing space and also allow room for a group instructional area and reading corner. Through the use of covered refrigerator boxes and a centrally located activities section for two of the major instructional centers (decoding and comprehension), the space was deemed suitable by the writer. Portable blackboards and bulletin boards have been utilized as dividers between some of the centers still allowing room for a small reading corner and a group activity table.

Selection of Reading Materials

Reading materials consisting of basal readers, trade books, dictionaries, magazines, workbooks, and taped stories covering a wide range of abilities have been made available to the students. By rotating library books frequently, a fresh supply of reading material was consistently presented. A selection system suggested by Goodman and Watson (15) has been utilized on a limited basis with intermediate students only. This system involves the reading of three books simultaneously, whereby one book is selected by

the student, one by the teacher, and one chosen jointly by student and teacher. A materials area and reading corner have been provided where students read each day, the length of time depending upon the age and ability of the child, and the other activities selected for that day.

Areas of Instruction

To ensure that no area of the reading process has been neglected in the development of the personalized program, a hierarchy of decoding skills as recognized by various authorities in reading (9; 11; 17) and Barrett's Taxonomy of Comprehension (16) have been utilized. Although there are many subskills in each of these major categories, for organizational purposes there is only one learning center for decoding skills and comprehension skills. As a student is assigned an activity from one of these categories, he pulls it from its centrally located file and takes it to the appropriate learning center. The two other learning centers in the room were dictionary skills and vocabulary development.

Decoding Skills

The elements included in this major area were basic sight words, phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and context clues. There are separate file boxes containing activities for each of these subskills. Task cards (on

index cards) have also been compiled and placed in one 5 x 8 file box.

On-going evaluation, to determine when a student has mastered a skill and can proceed further, has been accomplished through the use of Informal Reading Inventories, using either Lippincott or SRA readers, and/or word lists from sources as listed in the Appendix. Ekwall's Phonics Survey (10) will also be used for purposes of evaluation.

Vocabulary Development

In order to gather meaning from the printed page, the reader must be able to internalize the meanings of the words he reads and relate them to something from his past experience. Unless this occurs, reading becomes meaningless word-calling. To help students enlarge their working vocabulary, a learning center consisting of varied activities has been established. Included in the center are pictures, objects, crossword puzzles, and writing tasks covering the use of descriptive words, action words, synonyms, and antonyms, among others. Evaluation is made on the basis of performance on daily or weekly tasks, such as the student's ability to use correctly a newly acquired word in either a written or oral situation.

Comprehension Skills

The comprehension skills listed in the Barrett Taxonomy: Cognitive and Affective Dimension of Reading

Comprehension (16) have been used in the development of the comprehension section of this personalized reading program. These sub-areas consist of the following.

1. Literal comprehension: recognition and recall of details, main ideas, sequence, comparison, cause and effect relationships, and character traits.

2. Reorganization: classifying, outlining, summarizing, and synthesizing.

3. Inferential comprehension: supporting details, main ideas, sequence, comparisons, cause and effect relationships, character traits, predicting outcomes, and interpreting figurative language.

4. Evaluation: judging reality or fantasy, fact or opinion, adequacy and validity, appropriateness and worth, desirability and acceptability.

5. Appreciations: emotional response to content, identification with characters or incidents, reactions to author's use of language, and imagery.

The activities developed in these areas have dealt primarily with articles, short stories or books that the student has read. The activities have been written on task cards for individual assignments or have been designed as small group or one-to-one activities. Evaluation is done in teacher-student conferences, or on the basis of the written tasks.

Some of the instructional materials that have been utilized in various sections of the comprehension skills are listed in the Appendix. Evaluation of performance in these materials has also been made from the degree of accuracy on these written tasks.

Dictionary Skills

A separate center for developing dictionary skills has been established in one area of the room. The activities provided there include ranges of ability from approximately grades one through six. Before the student can proceed to a higher skill, he or she must prove adeptness at the preceding skill as shown by his/her performance on that particular assignment.

Conference and Instructional Management Techniques

To insure that each student is receiving instruction and reading material that is both appropriate to his needs and is motivational, an efficient and accurate recording system is essential. Included in this system is a method for recording pupil-teacher conferences, which are held for five to ten minutes per child, approximately once a week, as time permits. A sample conference record form is found in Chapter 4. The conference sessions will generally be for one of the following purposes: personal (talk sessions), informational, instructional, evaluative, or diagnostic.

Other records that have been developed cover the areas of phonic and comprehension skills (both individual and group records), structural analysis, and dictionary skills. These records provide feedback to the instructor and the student concerning a child's progress in each area of reading.

An oral reading record has been developed whereby the teacher can monitor the oral reading behavior of a student. By analyzing this behavior, future areas of instruction can be noted on the weekly assignment card. An independent book record is provided for the child to list the books he has read with a space to note his personal impressions of the book. Separate forms have been developed for intermediate and primary levels, which was a suggestion adapted from Goodman and Watson (15).

The method developed for assigning weekly tasks is a modification of that described by Fielder (12). The child receives his weekly assignments on a task chart that includes two or three more activities than he is expected to do. To provide a further degree of self-direction, the student chooses four of the activities listed on his chart, and also the day he wishes to do the activity. The exceptions to this are days for group instruction and conferences. These must take place on the day assigned. The fifth day is generally reserved for conferences, Silent Sustained Reading (SSR) types of activities, or reinforcement activities.

Samples of all records that have been developed are provided in Chapter 4.

Student Preparation

If a personalized program of instruction is to succeed, guidelines for appropriate behavior to the setting and performance expectations must be established between teacher and students. With adequate preparation, the implementation of this program will be accomplished smoothly and comfortably for all. To facilitate the changeover, the program has first been introduced through a series of discussion sessions. After this initial phase, the program was begun gradually with small groups of four to six students. As that group felt comfortable with the system, another group was introduced to the program.

Chapter 4

THE PROJECT

The elements that have been utilized in the development of a personalized program of reading instruction for elementary remedial students are too numerous and cumbersome for all of them to be included. Therefore, this chapter presents a sampling of the various activities and tasks that make up the program.

Major parts of the program are the recording systems that have been developed and the establishment of learning centers. Since the material provided in the learning centers must be changed frequently to meet the needs and abilities of all the students enrolled in the Title I program, it would be an impossible task to present all of that material here. Instead, photographs of the centers, the reading corner, samples of the tasks, and other organizational aspects are presented in this chapter.

A section of this chapter also includes samples of all of the recording forms that have been developed for this program. The student is responsible for recording the books he has read, and his impressions of them. Separate forms for intermediate and primary grades have been provided. The teacher records the student's progress on all other forms, both individual and group records.

Figure 1 shows the decoding skills learning center. Posted at the center are directions for using the center, and folders for primary and intermediate task sheets and task cards. Materials for the week are taken from the files shown in Figure 9 and placed in the folders. Each center has its own task check box.



Figure 1
Decoding Skills Learning Center

Samples of some of the activities included in the decoding learning center are shown in Figure 2. These include task sheets and cards, and some reinforcement activities.



Figure 2

Samples of Decoding Center Activities

The vocabulary development learning center is depicted in Figure 3. This center contains files of task sheets and cards, for intermediate and primary levels, directions for use of the center, individual student word cards, and a task check box.



Figure 3

Vocabulary Development Learning Center

Figure 5 shows the learning center for comprehension skills. Because of space restrictions, file boxes containing additional activities for comprehension skills are located in a separate area (see Figure 9). A task check box, tape recorder, directions for center use, and files for activities and task cards are all located at the learning center.



Figure 5
Comprehension Skills Learning Center

Figure 6 shows some of the activities that are found in the comprehension skills learning center. There are both individual and group activities shown.



Figure 6
Samples of Comprehension Activities

The dictionary skills learning center is seen in Figure 7. Files with activities for dictionary skills, task folders, directions for center use, and a task check box are placed at the center. Dictionaries are located on a shelf near this learning center.



Figure 7

Dictionary Skills Learning Center

Samples of the activities located at the dictionary skills learning center are illustrated in Figure 8. All of the activities for teaching dictionary skills are placed at the learning center.



Figure 8

Samples of Dictionary Skill Activities

Figure 9 shows the file boxes which contain the activities for all the subskills in the comprehension and decoding centers. The titles of five subskill boxes in comprehension are "literal," "reorganization," "inferential," "evaluation," and "appreciation." The decoding file boxes are labeled "basic sight words," "phonetic analysis," "structural analysis," and "context clues."



Figure 9
Decoding and Comprehension Files

The portion of the reading corner that is illustrated in Figure 10 shows trade books, magazines, and taped stories. Text books and work books are located in another portion of the room.



Figure 10
Section of Reading Corner

The lower half of Figure 11 shows some of the student mail boxes, where individual files and materials in use by the students are kept. Above the mail box are the files for decoding and comprehension activities.



Figure 11
Student Mail Boxes and Files

Figure 12 shows a separate section of the student mail boxes. On top of the mail boxes are reinforcement game activities for decoding and comprehension skills, plus file boxes holding group records and task cards.



Figure 12
Student Mail Boxes

Figure 14 shows the routing chart which indicates the learning center at which a child is working. When he has chosen an activity from his assignment card, he puts his name card in a slot next to the appropriate center on the chart. When the task is completed, he takes his name card from the slot and replaces it in a slot to the right of the chart.

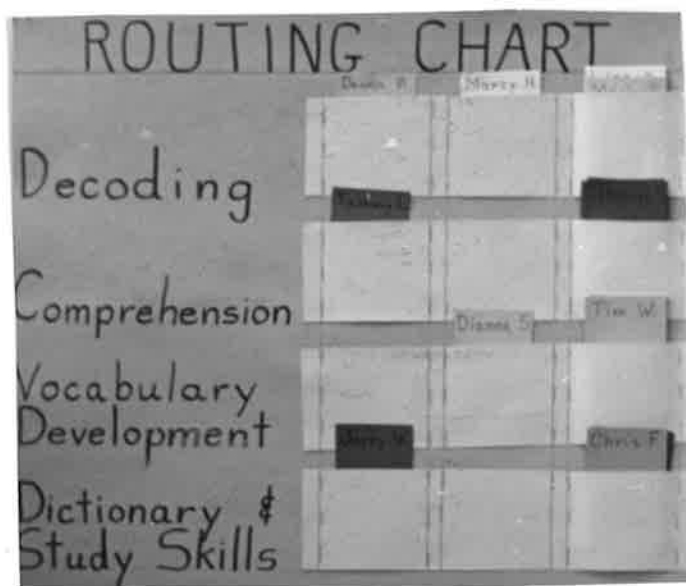


Figure 14
Student Routing Chart

Descriptions of the Records

The following pages contain samples of all of the recording forms which were developed for this personalized reading program, along with descriptions of each sample.

The weekly task card, Figure 15, is put in each student's mail box on Monday morning. Since there are generally two more tasks listed than the student is required to do for the week, he may choose four of the learning center activities listed there. Reading materials he has chosen are noted on another form. When he completes a task, he notes the date on his assignment card. By Friday, the four activities chosen must be completed and checked by the teacher.

The conference record, Figure 16, is used for all types of conferences. The teacher makes notations as to the topic, or type, of conference (personal, informational, instructional, evaluative, or diagnostic), and the information obtained during the conference. The conference forms are also numbered for easy reference as to their chronological order.

MY WEEKLY TASKS			
NAME _____		WEEK _____	
TASK NO.	DESCRIPTION OF THE TASK	DATE COMPLETE	TEACHER CHECK

Figure 15
Weekly Task Card

CONFERENCE RECORD	
NAME _____	Conference No. _____
	Date _____
TOPIC _____	Time _____

Figure 16
Conference Record

The student reading record, Figure 17, is kept by the teacher, to note materials used and the reading performance of the student during individual oral reading sessions.

STUDENT READING RECORD

[illegible][illegible]

Figure 17

Student Reading Record

The records which the student keeps of books or articles he has read, and his opinions of these materials, are found in Figure 18 for primary students, and Figure 19 for intermediate students. These records are kept in the students' individual folders.

BOOKS I HAVE READ*

NAME _____ GRADE _____

Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you finish the book? _____

Did you like it?  yes  some  no

Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you finish the book? _____

Did you like it?  yes  some  no

Figure 18

Books I Have Read for Primary Students

*Source: Goodman and Watson (15).

BOOKS I HAVE READ

NAME _____ GRADE _____

1. Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you like the book? _____

Why? _____

2. Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you like the book? _____

Why? _____

3. Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you like the book? _____

Why? _____

4. Title _____

Author _____ Date _____

Did you like the book? _____

Why? _____

Figure 19

Books I Have Read for Intermediate Students

Student progress in mastering phonic skills is recorded on the form shown as Figure 20. His performance is assessed after a skill is taught. Preceding skills are checked periodically to see whether the skill has been retained. The check date, together with a plus or minus to note satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress, is placed in one of the boxes by the skill.

PHONICS SKILLS, STUDENT RECORD

NAME _____ GRADE _____ YEAR _____

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

CONS.		INIT-c BLENDS		lp		ǃ		v-DIGR. & DIPHT.	
b		bl		lt		a		ee	
d		cl		mp		e		ea	
f		fl		nk		i		oa	
h		gl		nt		o		ai	
j		pl		nd		u		ay	
k		sl		pt		VCE		oo	
l		br		st		a		oo	
m		cr		sk		e		ue	
n		dr		sp		i		oe	
p		fr		r-CONT. VOWELS		o		ui	
qu		gr		ar		u		iē	
r		pr		or		y(ē)		īe	
t		tr		er		y(ī)		ōu	
v		sc		ir		LETTER GROUP		ōw	
w		sk		ur		eigh		ey	
y-		sm		CONS. DIGR.		igh		ew	
z		sn		-ck		wa		au	
c/k/		st		sh		le		aw	
c/s/		sp		ch tch		SILENT LETTERS		oi	
g/g/		sw		th		k		oy	
g/j/		tw		wh		w		ou	
s/s/		FINAL-c BLENDS		ph		b		ow	
s/z/		ct		gh		h			
x/x/		ft		-ng		l			
x/gs/		lf		dge		t			

Figure 20

Phonic Skills, Student Record

Group records for phonic skills have also been developed. These are shown as Figures 21 through 25. The purpose for keeping the group record is to facilitate the formation of small, temporary groups for instruction in a particular skill.

Form A

Year:

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

[illegible]

Figure 21

Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form A

Form B

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

[illegible]

Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form B

Form C

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

[illegible]

Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form C

Form D

Year:

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

[illegible]

Figure 24

Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form D

PHONIC SKILLS, GROUP RECORD

Form E

Year:

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

[illegible]

Figure 25

Phonic Skills, Group Record - Form E

To record student progress in comprehension skills, an individual record and a group record are used. These are shown as Figures 26 and 27, respectively. Assessment is based on weekly activities and periodic checks during student-teacher conferences. Dates of assessment and performance level are noted in the spaces by the skills. The group record assists the teacher in forming groups for instruction in a particular skill.

COMPREHENSION, STUDENT RECORD

Name _____ Grade _____ Year _____

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

Skill	Date					Skill	Date				
LITERAL: recog. & recall						REORGANIZATION					
Details						Classifying					
Main idea						Outlining					
Sequence						Summarizing					
Comparisons						Synthesizing					
Cause-effect relat.						EVALUATION					
Character traits						Reality-fantasy					
INFERENTIAL						Fact-opinion					
Supporting details						Adequacy-validity					
Main ideas						Appropriateness					
Sequence						Worth-desirab.-accept.					
Comparisons						APPRECIATIONS					
Cause-effect relat.						Emotional response					
Character traits						Ident. with char. & incid.					
Predicting outcomes						Reactions to auth. lang.					
Interp. figur. language						Imagery					

Figure 26

Comprehension, Student Record

COMPREHENSION, GROUP RECORD

Year _____

Code: + satisfactory; - needs improvement

Name													
Comprehension Skill													
LITERAL: recog., recall													
Details													
Main idea													
Sequence													
Comparisons													
Cause-effect relat.													
Character traits													
REORGANIZATION													
Classifying													
Outlining													
Summarizing													
Synthesizing													
INFERENTIAL													
Support. details													
Main ideas													
Sequence													
Comparisons													
Cause-effect relat.													
Character traits													
Predicting outcomes													
Interp. fig. lang.													
EVALUATION													
Reality-fantasy													
Fact-opinion													
Adeq.-validity													
Appropriateness													
Worth-desir.-accept.													
APPRECIATIONS													
Emotional response													
Ident. char. & incid.													
Reactions-lang.													
Imagery													

Figure 27

Comprehension, Group Record

A student form for monitoring analysis skills, use of context clues, and basic sight words is presented as Figure 28. Dictionary skills mastery and vocabulary development are recorded on the form shown as Figure 29. Assessment based on tests, performance on weekly activities, and periodic checks during student-teacher conferences is made after a unit of study in a particular area, or as individual tasks are completed.

STUDENT RECORD

Name _____ Grade _____

Year _____

	Date - Skill - Performance (+ or -)						
STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS							
Root Words							
Endings							
Prefixes							
Suffixes							
Contractions							
Compound Words							
Syllabication							
Word Accent							
Similarities-Differences							
Auditory							
Visual							
CONTEXT CLUES							
BASIC SIGHT WORDS							

Figure 28

Student Record for Structural Analysis,
Context Clues, and Basic Sight Words

Student Record

Name _____ Grade _____

Year _____

	Date - Skill - Performance (+ or -)						
DICTIONARY SKILLS							
Uses guide words							
Alphabetizes							
Uses pronunciation key							
VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT							
Definition							
Multiple meanings							
Synonyms							
Homonyms							
Antonyms							

Figure 29

Student Record for Dictionary Skills
and Vocabulary Development

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some major factors which must be considered in the establishment of a reading program which will enable the student to realize his maximum potential for acquiring reading skills are the widely varying abilities and learning styles of children enrolled in our educational system. To facilitate the process of better fulfilling the needs of each individual remedial reading student a program of personalized reading instruction has been developed. The remainder of this chapter presents a summary of the program, and recommendations for further investigation into the utilization of the individualized approach in a remedial reading situation.

Summary of the Project

An initial phase in developing this personalized program was evaluating the physical environment to plan the most efficient use of the existing space. After several arrangements were tried, a room plan evolved that incorporated four learning center areas plus a reading corner and group instructional area.

Two important aspects of any personalized reading program are the selection of materials to be made available

to the students, and the manner in which students select materials. Student population of the Title I Reading Program, and the varied ages, reading abilities, and interests of the students were all considered in choosing materials. Also considered were the need for a wide variety of types of materials (trade books, magazines, text books, newspapers, dictionaries, etc.), and the need for frequent change of selections, to provide new and fresh material for these generally reluctant readers.

The instructional areas included in the personalized reading program were chosen with the goal of incorporating all of the major elements of the reading process. After investigating the literature, these elements were condensed into the four major categories: decoding skills, comprehension skills, vocabulary development, and dictionary and study skills. To determine the placement of the individual student in one or more of these categories, the student's reading performance on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, and informal assessments was determined. Placement was made on the basis of need. Evaluation of progress was determined periodically on the basis of informal tests and check lists, and through student-teacher conferences.

Two elements which were considered crucial in developing a successful personalized reading program were student-teacher conferences and an effective, efficient recording system which this writer has labeled instructional

management techniques. Conferences were utilized for a variety of purposes, such as to establish rapport with the student, to obtain information (likes, dislikes, fears, goals, among other things), and for instructional, evaluative, and diagnostic purposes. Forms were developed to record these conferences. Each of the major instructional areas also have at least one form to record progress. A weekly assignment card and a form to record the names and impressions of books as they are completed have been provided for each student.

Preparing the students for participating in a reading program that differs from accustomed procedures is an essential ingredient to a successful personalized reading program. Prior to implementation of the program, the teacher discussed with the students the purposes and goals of a personalized system and established guidelines for performance and behavior. The program was implemented gradually with one small group becoming familiar with it before another group was introduced. Using these procedures, transition to the personalized reading program occurred smoothly.

Recommendations for Further Study

Since few studies dealing with individualized or personalized reading programs in a remedial setting were encountered in the literature, this writer has attempted to adapt those elements suggested for the classroom setting

into a remedial reading program. Because of the wide range of abilities, needs, learning styles, and interests represented by remedial students in grades one through six, this program must of necessity incorporate a much broader range of all aspects of the reading process. Even though small groups of students are present in the room at any one time, the length of time allotted for each group is relatively short, generally one-half hour. Since between forty and forty-five students attend remedial reading classes each day, organization is of the utmost importance to maintain current records. Determining each student's weekly assignments and recording them on individual cards is a time-consuming process along with recording progress in each of the four instructional areas. It is important that the recording process does not become so involved that it takes precedence over planning, instruction, and personal contact with the student. Although an organized, efficient management system generally enhances any instructional program, it is of utmost importance where large numbers of children with widely varying needs and abilities are concerned. Further investigation is needed to develop possible alternative methods of recording information and organizing a remedial reading program based on the personalized concept.

Studies to determine the degree of growth in reading ability as a result of a personalized approach would be

of interest. Although the personalized approach of providing for individual differences appears to offer the best means of helping a student achieve his maximum potential, further studies are necessary to determine whether reading achievement is greatest in actuality when a personalized method is used in a remedial situation.

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APPENDIX

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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